

ANTONY GORMLEY

THREE PART OBJECT WORKS, 1979 - 1991

LAND SEA AND AIR I is the foundation of my work. It is based on a granite shore stone brought from the West Coast of Ireland, which was covered in lead and then reopened.

In separating the form from the substance, I realised that it was possible to remove the indexical imprint of an object from the object itself. In the finished piece, I covered the stone two more times. One case is filled with water, one is left empty, and the third contains the original stone.

I see lead as the agency through which substance becomes imagination. The elements are removed from sight, touch, even sound: to summon the substance from the name, we have to imagine it. Three identical forms contain the primary elements of this planet and demand our imaginative involvement.

All of the lead works are responses to the Cold War and the fear that humans might be the agents of their own destruction. This work, by preserving the three basic elements out of which all forms and life itself come, is a guarantee: seeds of a future world beyond potential nuclear destruction.

FRUITS OF THE EARTH progressively insulates toxic objects to produce surrogate organic forms: my father's loaded .45 mm handgun from the First World War, a bottle of wine and a machete, are successively covered in layers of lead until they begin to resemble fruit.

In THREE BODIES, I took three discrete objects out of their respective realms, moulded them, made the lead case and then replaced the objects within their realm: the shark back into the sea, the pumpkin back into the earth, the rock back into the quarry. The space they had once occupied was replaced with earth: a reconciliation of voids and solids, imaginative and substantial representation, while making the connection of all forms to a common base of materiality.

THREE THOUGHTS was the reply to that proposition, suggesting that thoughts too could have form. Thoughts have an infinite extendibility. The largest objects that we know are all planets. This work makes concrete the connection between thought and substance.

The principle of three runs through both the object and body works, for example LAND SEA AND AIR I (land, sea and air), THREE BODIES (animal, vegetable and mineral), LAND SEA AND AIR II (seeing, hearing and smelling), or THREE CALLS (thought, speech and action).
